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Literary Record.

THE WORKS OF CHARLES LAMB. (In Four Vols.) Crosby, Nichols, Lee & Co., Boston.

WE but too often notice books as a duty, not as a pleasure. In some cases, however, both are happily combined. The works of Charles Lamb afford us quite as much gratification in the notice as the reading of them. All his writings show clearly the beautiful and gentle spirit in which they were conceived and written out. Well do we recollect—after completing an orthodox course of reading in our younger days, being the long line of English poets and essayists that one has to read in order to be perfect—of our first encounter with Lamb. We kicked the fixed stars and orderly planets of our literary firmament into an imaginary limbo, and clung to the tail of that comet. And, did we not "see sights!" We found illuminated corners of the mental universe that we never dreamt of—odd feelings brought into the rank and file of common experience, strange tastes and fancies made acceptable by learning, objectionable antipathies justified by simplicity and "infinite humor," poverty exalted by wit and kindliness above every delight and gratification that fall to the lot of the "darlings of fortune." And when Lamb's letters appeared, did we not get them and ponder over the strange affecting problem of his life. What suffering, what patience! what pride-dissolving facts arrested our thoughts, bringing us back from the poetic empyrean to the sober realities from which arose the heavenly incense of his cup of sorrow. Whoever has not read Lamb through and through, has not done something toward completing his education—we do not mean the hollow, external standard of our parrot schools and colleges, but that finer, inner culture, which absorbs the life-giving moisture of such literature, as wild flowers in the midst of rank grass imbibe the dew condensed by the cold of night.

We should not be doing justice to the publishers of this beautiful edition of Lamb's works, did we not express our admiration of the style in which it is got up. The paper, type, and printing are admirable, forming one of the finest examples of the fine taste of the Boston publishers. We hope that Messrs. Crosby, Nichols, Lee & Co. will find it a compensating effort.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF BOUVERIE. (A Novel, in 2 vols.) By a Southern Lady. Derby & Jackson.

Bouverie is a remarkable novel. Remarkable for the great ingenuity displayed in the construction of a deep and original plot. Remarkable for terseness of style, for deep thought, fine descriptive powers, and trenchant logic. Remarkable for the deep and thrilling interest of the story. Remarkable for the inventive talent displayed by the author, who has created characters of an uncommon kind, and, what is rare with our novelists, made them move and speak with so much fidelity to nature, that the reader forgets that they are only fictions. We like Bouverie because it is an uncommon novel,—because its characters are cleverly individualized, and all those hidden mysteries of the human heart brought to the surface and exposed to view with a master hand. We like Bouverie, because, like an ingenious piece of machinery, all its parts evolve smoothly and naturally, showing great skill in the workman who constructed it. We regard Bouverie as a striking proof of the high standard of literary talent this country possesses at the present time. It is

an evidence also that this talent only needs proper encouragement to take high place in the world of letters.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES. By Samuel Smiles, author of "Self Help," and "Life of George Stephenson." Ticknor & Fields, Boston.

A very entertaining series of brief biographies of eminent men, whose names are as familiar as household words to Americans. Steel portraits of James Watts, Doctor Arnold, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Leigh Hunt, Robert Browning, and Gerrald Massey, embellish the volume, which is got up with that good taste so characteristic of the publishers. Prominent among the biographies, and which will be found most interesting to the reader, are those of James Watts, Hugh Miller, Richard Cobden, Bulwer (the novelist), Lord John Russell, Disraeli, Gladstone, Hawthorne, Carlyle, Theodore Hook, Edgar A. Poe, and Coleridge.

THE GENTLEMAN'S BOOK OF ETIQUETTE: and Manual of Politeness. By Cecil B. Hartley. G. G. Evans, Publisher, Philadelphia.

If this book had only appeared before we gave that ball in honor of the Prince, what an assistance it would have been to us in shaping our manners. Taking Cecil B. Hartley for our guide, we should (no thanks to Mr. Field and Genio C. Scott), have known exactly what to wear, and how to wear it, which foot to put forward, and what to do with our hands when we advanced to make our bow to the Prince; how even to hold our spoon when we took supper. Nothing is omitted. We are intelligently instructed how to keep our politeness up while we run the gauntlet of the street, the table, the ball-room, the evening party, and during the morning call. The handsome men of the fashionable world will find this an invaluable companion. It would also be a good book to put into the hands of our aldermen, whose manners might be very much improved by an attentive persusal of it. We merely throw out this hint from a knowledge that books of etiquette are not in their line.

A companion to the above is the "Ladies' Book of Etiquette and Fashion," by Florence Hartley, and published by the same house. It aims to instruct ladies in all the great and varied details of etiquette. We should despair of any young lady who, having read this volume attentively, was not sufficiently polished to enter the very best society. Whatever may be thought of such books as these by the man of grave thought, they are, when intelligently written, very useful to the young.

THE OLD FARM HOUSE. By Mrs. C. H. Butler Laing. G. G. Evans, Philadelphia.

The picture of the old farm house, and its homely occupants, is well enough drawn; but the title by no means conveys the true character of the book. The "Old Farm House" is a domestic story, the interest of which turns on the sufferings of a young and beautiful girl, whose ambitious and heartless mother compels her to marry a man who turns out to be a very wretch in human form. The scenes are chiefly laid in New England, and a well-known asylum for the insane, under charge of the good Doctor Woodville, comes in for a share of the author's descriptive powers. The moral of the book is good; but as a literary effort, it hardly rises to mediocrity. To be truthful, both the story and the plot have seen too much service in the hands of writers fresh from boarding school.

ITALY IN TRANSITION. By William Arthur, A.M. Harper & Brothers, New York.

We cannot conscientiously say much for the literary execution of this volume. But it is valuable as giving a clear insight